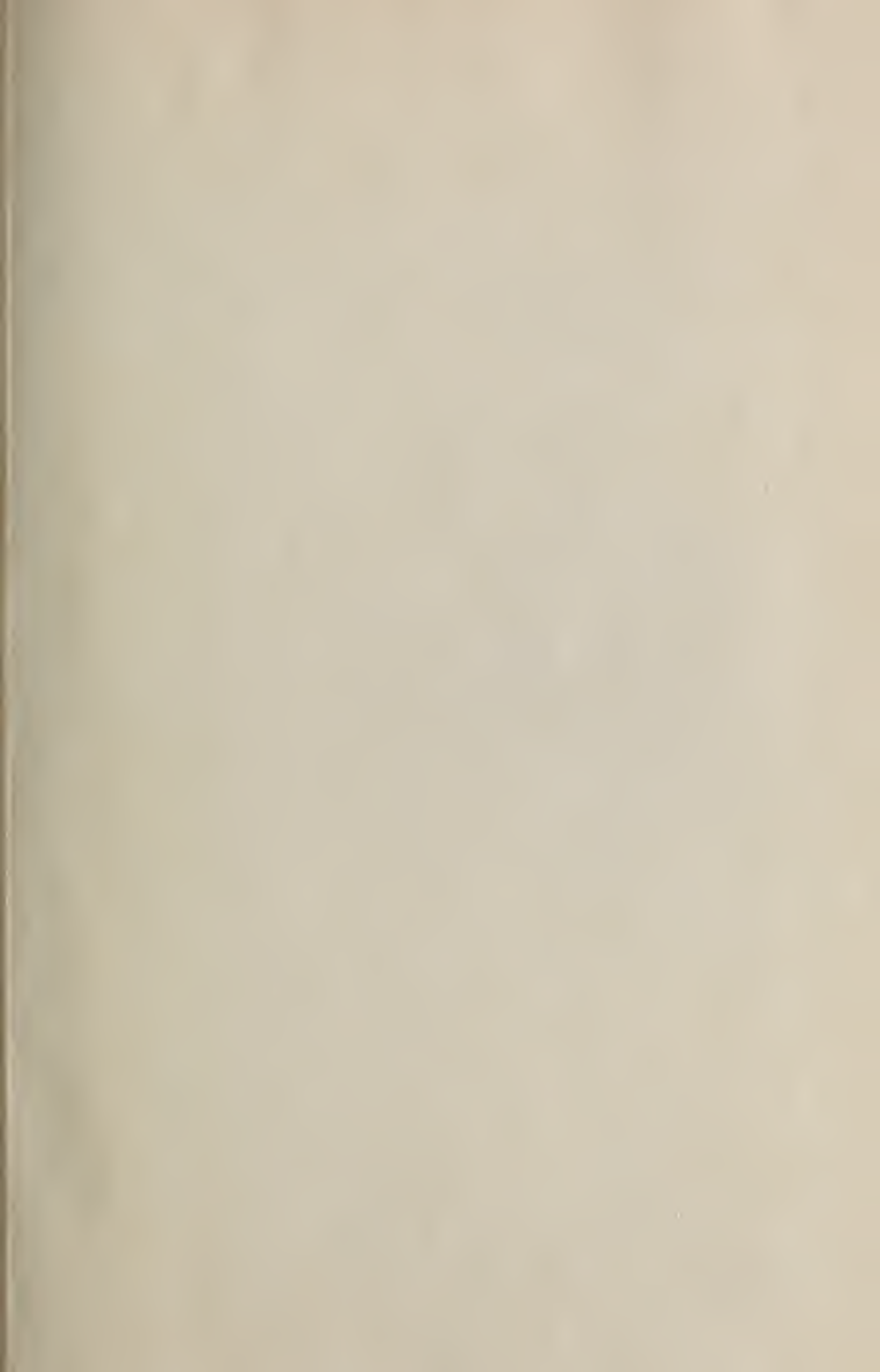


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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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Missionary Letters and News from Arabia.

January-March, 1903.

THE ANNUAL MEETING.

BY REV. JOHN VAN ESS.

The baby of the Mission is asked to write about the annual meeting. This is done perhaps because out of the mouths of babes and sucklings praise may be expected, but probably because the new-comer who still has the point of view of those at home may be able to write from that point of view.

The annual meeting is *the* event of the year on the field. After twelve months of continued and somewhat isolated labor, the workers of course look forward to a short season of Christian intercourse and of civilized sociability. Such it truly is. Those of exuberant spirits overflow and those otherwise disposed are revived and rejuvenated. Thus by giving good cheer we are not poorer and by losing dejection and despondency we truly are richer. But the social phase of the annual meeting is by no means the prime object. We gather for work.

The new missionaries arrived in time for the opening session and were warmly welcomed. Gratitude filled the hearts of all, for our prayers had been answered.

On January 12th the annual meeting began. Mr. Moerdyk passed very creditably his second examination, which required an accurate knowledge of the Arabic, written and spoken, and was topped by an extempore sermon in the vernacular.

Accounts were then audited and reports rendered. The most interesting and the cause for the greatest thankfulness was the report of the Hospital Building Committee, which though appointed only a year ago, now invited the mission to behold the hospital, finished and furnished in the space of seven months. Where

a year ago were mat huts now stands that magnificent building—glorious monument to the generosity of the Mason family. Like the Saviour's arms, its doors are always open to receive the sick in body, and like the Saviour too, those in charge try to give healing for the body, and, best of all, healing for the soul as well.

On Sabbath, Jan. 26th, the hospital was dedicated to God and Arabia. Mr. Zwemer made the address and Mr. Cantine offered the dedicatory prayers. And now this hospital is an evidence that we intend to stay in Arabia. And while we stay we will spread ourselves.

It was decided to open work at Kuwait, near the head of the gulf. Kuwait has risen to be a place of importance since the projected railroad will have a terminus there. And when it comes we want to be there too to show the world that the Cross must not be absent if Kuwait is to remain important.

The possibilities of the inland country were also discussed but at present the way for a direct entrance seems to be closed. Only by a long detour through Nasariyeh, or by coming up from Oman, does the way promise an opening. Some day we hope to take a branch line from Kuwait to Riad and hold our annual meeting in the heart of Nejd.

Best of all, the Mission decided to ask the Board and the churches for *eight new missionaries*. This is no idle request. We want them, want them now, and believe we will get them. Nasariyeh needs a clergyman, and so does Amara. Busrah asks for a single lady, and for Kuwait a clergyman must be had. For Bahrein a second doctor and a second clergyman. And then we must send a clergyman to hold Sharga and surely a doctor to help Mr. Cantine in difficult Muscat. Thus the army at the front signals for re-inforcements, else it cannot hold the ground already gained. For the honor of our King we cannot retreat. This was the keynote of the whole meeting.

We were also gladdened by the presence of Mr. C. E. G. Tisdall, Persian agent for the British and Foreign Bible Society. It was encouraging to hear him tell how the Bible is being spread everywhere by that noble London society, which also has done and still does so much for us.

On Sabbath we celebrated the Lord's Supper and were fully fed and blessed at His hand. Oh, how the soul feasts at such a table, at such a time and in such a place.

All work was finished on Monday and on Tuesday the Busrah delegation left for *home*. Now the plans just made will be carried into execution. God grant us the needed strength.

HOW THE MONEY IS SPENT.

BY REV. JAMES CANTINE.

It has been thought that the contributors to our Mission funds may be interested in hearing something about the way in which their gifts are spent on the field. As the Treasurer's books have been in my hands during the past year I have had opportunity to collate some of the figures and can give a few results.

It is doubtless known that we have always emphasized the evangelistic side of our work—the employment of native helpers to preach and circulate the Gospel—and as would be expected we have expended more under this class than under any other.

Next in point of outlay has come our medical work. Our third missionary was a physician, and we have added others until now we have four qualified physicians (two the wives of missionaries), and two trained nurses,—just half our total number,—and the cost of this branch is not far behind that of the former. Then for a few years past we have also been looking for openings for schools, but as yet have spent but little in this way.

To put the preceding into figures and excluding all salaries, cost of buildings and what might be considered personal expenses, our evangelistic work was 57 per cent., medical 40 per cent., and educational 3 per cent. of the remainder of our income.

As we look over the evangelistic statistics, we will have to admit that we get a smaller amount of work done for an equivalent sum than do our sister missions. This is due to our geographical position and to the difficulties of the climate. After many trials and some dismal failures we are about ready to admit

that we must bring our teachers, colporters and Bible readers from the northern missions, and it seems the further north the better. Our best men so far have come from Mardin, in Central Turkey, as far from us in point of time as is New York. The journey is, of course, expensive for them, costing from twenty-five to thirty-five dollars, and as they cannot seemingly stand this hot and feverish climate well we cannot depend upon keeping them long without a furlough home, so that in some years their traveling expenses to and fro amount to a considerable fraction of their total cost.

Their salaries are fixed partly by the cost of living and partly by the scale which exists among the business houses employing native clerks. Our best colporters get two hundred dollars per year, which is far above that paid in any other of our mission fields.

Our own touring also seems to us expensive, not because of any special initial expense (we seldom take more with us than we can load upon our individual donkeys or camels and then sit upon) but because our predecessors have been rich travelers or government officials whose lavishness makes the demands upon *us* sometimes extortionate. Still a trip inland of about one hundred miles by missionary and helper seldom costs over fifty dollars.

In our medical work a large portion of the outlay, perhaps 60 per cent., is for drugs and appliances, many of which have to be brought from England. The remainder is for assistants and the general expenses of hospitals and dispensaries.

Our educational work is still too small to require notice.

In making out our estimates from year to year and in the settlement of all accounts, which duties we have just finished again at our yearly meeting, we realize that the money asked for and used is often the fruit of sacrifice at home; and we have need of prayer that with all economy we still may not hesitate to make broad and wise plans for the future welfare of Christ's church in this part of Arabia.

OTHER HUSBANDMEN, BUT THE SAME SOIL.

REV. S. M. ZWEMER, D. D.

We rejoice with our brethren of the Keith Falconer Mission in their first fruits. Rev. J. C. Young, M. D., writes from Aden :

“ On Sunday I baptized Sheikh Salem in the house of our deacon, Mr. Whyte. The baptism would have taken place in the Keith-



DR. YOUNG'S DISPENSARY.

Falconer Church, had not the fanatic spirit of the people here been so lately manifested, that I was afraid the Sheikh would not be allowed to leave the place alive were it to become generally known that he had publicly honored Christ Jesus as God's Son, and been baptized in the name of our great Triune God.

“ In all my dealings with Sheikh Salem I recognized a devout man and an earnest soul, seeking first the kingdom of God and His

righteousness. Perhaps, too, the fact of his being, comparatively speaking, a rich man, prevented me, as it did all others, from supposing that he had any ulterior motive in seeking to know the truth. From the first he wished to learn, and then, whenever and wherever he had an opportunity, to give to others the benefit of his knowledge ; so that I heartily agree with my friend, J. Gordon Logan of the Egyptian Band, who saw the man both in the school and in my house, when he writes from Suez, saying, ' Praise be to God ! It is worth more than ten years' work itself to have been the means of bringing such a soul as Sheikh Salem out of the darkness of Islam into the marvellous light of God's love.' "

And from our sister mission on the north at Bagdad we hear that Yakoob Yuhanna and his wife, who were for some time with us at Busrah, are standing firm in the faith and shining for Christ in the darkness of their village. This mission, like our own, is sadly in need of re-enforcements lest the advantage be lost which has been gained by years of toil and sacrifice in the past. The C. M. S. school is flourishing and Doctor Briggstock of Syria will soon arrive at Bagdad to help in the medical work carried on for so many years by Doctor Henry Martyn Sutton.

The wide influence of the Arabic Bible is wonderfully illustrated by the following extract from a letter of Mr. J. McCarthy, which was read at the China Inland Mission prayer-meeting on Saturday, December 13th, 1902. Mr. Rhodes is stationed at Yuinan-fu, in the province of Yuinan.

" There are a good many Mohammedans living outside the South Gate, and Mr. Rhodes has been making special efforts to reach some of them during the quarter. Mr. Rhodes says: ' As we have many Mohammedans in our district and three mosques, I have attempted a little work among them. I sent out packets of Scripture in Arabic to all these mosques. Since then I have had requests for over sixty portions and four New Testaments in Arabic. The news spread to more distant mosques. The teachers in these mosques also sent requests for Arabic Scripture. I have had a good many visits from various teachers and students of Arabic. One day nine came together, and for two hours we had a busy and somewhat lively time. Of the successive visitors, one young man, who could read no Chinese but only Arabic, has visited me very frequently. Sometimes he brings one or two

friends, and sometimes he comes alone. Like the rest of the students of Arabic, he intends to take up a mosque after a time and lead the prayers. We have all been drawn out in prayer for this young man. He is less bigoted than the rest of those I have recently met. Will you please remember him in prayer, and also the others who have received portions of Scripture ?'

"This work has been carried on through the daytime. The evenings have been given exclusively to the brethren as, when the gates are closed, the Mohammedans are all outside the city. Mr. Rhodes says : 'I never knew the people listen better than they do now, but the Lord grant that some hearts may soon be touched by the spirit.' "

When we remember that there are more than twenty million Mohammedans in China, such a news item stirs to prayer and strengthens faith. Workers among and for Moslems need to encourage one another. None of us escapes the depressing power of Islam and people at home do not realize its effect. In the *Niger and Yoruba Notes*, Dr. W. Miller writes on October 2nd, 1902 :

"I have been much and sadly struck with what I have heard lately of men who have come back after their first term of missionary service amongst Mohammedans, of the settled sadness almost to despair in even their countenances ; and I ask you if you see this not to put it down to lack of faith or love, but if not fully able to sympathize with them through not having been in their circumstances, at least let it lead to earnest prayer and the tenderest spirit towards them, for I assure you that for a man fresh from the 'Varsities, Conventions, Schoolboys' Camps, S. V. M. U. work, etc., where God has been wonderfully working through him, to be suddenly launched into the utter deadliness of that superhuman enemy, Mohammedanism's paralysing influences, to go on month after month and see nothing but solid opposition or indifference ; to feel that men are living the most hopelessly awful lives with the most hopelessly damning Creed, and yet to seem frozen and unable to in any way meet or overcome the forces against them ; I tell you that it needs, what we have, but all use too little, the whole Mighty Power of the indwelling Holy Spirit to keep one from utter fainting. It seems more than hopeless, for men seem not only to deliberately choose evil, delight in it, and stop others from seeking good ; but to be so perverted in their souls that they cannot even have a conception of

holiness, and no picture of such a state appeals to them or touches a chord. Mohammedanism is Satan's greatest masterpiece."

The appeal for Hadramaut which appeared in the *Missionary Review* and in our last number has met with response. A band of Danish missionaries, preparing for work among Moslems by language-study in Syria, read of this open door and one of their number is already on his way to Makalla. This new enterprise calls for much prayer as well as thanksgiving. God speed the enterprise and bless it.

THE GIRLS' SCHOOL AT BAHREIN.

MRS. S. M. ZWEMER.

Since the hospital was opened the two rooms formerly occupied in the mission-house for the dispensary have been used for the school; the larger one for the boys and the smaller for the girls. It is the ordinary native room with two square holes for windows, a low ceiling and one door opening into the court-yard. Our new seats look very nice and are more comfortable and suitable than the packing-cases hitherto used. From friends at Newark, N. J., we received some blackboard cloth and chalk which are very useful.

The pupils have increased in quantity and improved in quality although we still run from rag-tag to velvet gowns embroidered with gold braid. There are nine Moslem girls all in the A. B. C. grade; one Jewess who is diligent and of average intelligence learning everything in the way of religious teaching and not disputing any doctrine so far.

I am trying to train this girl into a hospital probationer and she has got as far as to be able to dust and clean things. The rest of the pupils are Christians. The school is opened at eight o'clock in the morning by a hymn and prayer, and then follow recitations in reading, writing, spelling, composition and arithmetic. After the Scripture lesson the older girls write out portions

of Scripture from memory, like the Lord's Prayer in Arabic or the order of the day's work in creation. Most of the girls enjoy the classes and look forward to lesson time with delight. The school has two daily sessions. Miss Lutton takes it for an hour and a half in the morning and I in the afternoon for two hours. In the afternoon, part of the time is spent in needle-work. The elder girls are learning to hem and over-sew *neatly*, a thing unheard of before in this country. The Arab women and girls do fancy



GIRLS' SCHOOL AT BAHREIN.

work, gold lace and braid, and silk needle-work for their dresses, but their plain sewing is very bad and careless. Some of our girls are making patchwork quilts and one has made a very nice white apron.

The picture gives you a glimpse of the school, although the faces of the children are not very distinct. Our wall-roll of Scripture scenes happened to be turned open at "The Resurrection of Lazarus," when the photograph was taken. We believe that

Jesus raised him *from the dead*, and have strong faith to believe that He is able now to raise those who are spiritually dead on this island.

Take this thought from the picture and turn it into a prayer that our little school may become a power in evangelizing this people ; that it may be as the "leaven which a woman took and hid" in the meal until all was leavened.

PREACHING IN BUSRAH DISPENSARY.

REV. JAMES E. MOERDYK.

The doctor of the dispensary or hospital is expected to furnish the audience. The service is distinctly the doctor's service. The people come to see the doctor and it is through him that they hear the gospel, whether he himself conducts the service or whether another comes in to take the service for him. It requires tact to collect such a gathering of hearers, as well as tact to preach to them. The sick come straggling in from early morning until noon, and oftentimes later, and if these are treated as fast as they come and go they do not receive the gospel except as the doctor may give it to them in private conversation. The problem is to have them all come at a certain time not too late in the morning, both in order to be certain that everyone hears the message, and also in order to help the preacher, who may have other work for the day, so that his time is precious. Such a gathering is generally of a very mixed kind. There are the sick, lame, deaf, blind. It may be composed of only men and children. Perhaps there are women present who are represented by so many bundles of clothes, set up in a corner or along the wall. Sometimes the preacher prefers an audience of only Mohammedans. A sprinkling of Jews makes it more interesting, and he often enjoys "driving home" at the Chaldean and Armenian Christians. Orientals are apt to be quite Methodistic. There are likely to be many exclamations of "True, true," and "Praise the Lord ;" or they may

disapprove of what they hear. Some preachers are often annoyed at this, but I quite enjoy it, for it helps me to know whether I am speaking in their language or not, and whether they understand the statements. Two of the best remembered services were : one, when a seemingly disinterested hearer suddenly began to listen very attentively, until finally he, too, preached when he said, "That's it"; and another, when a man was blunt enough to tell the preacher that he lied.

A dispensary service usually consists of the reading of a portion of Scripture, an address, and a prayer. Singing, as such, by the members of the mission who may be present, or by a soloist has not yet been attempted. It is recorded of Mohammed that he forbade long services. Said he, "Verily, some of you cause the congregation to loathe the services: everyone who acts as Imam must make the service short; for in the assembly there are many sickly, weak and needy ones." The dispensary service, too, must be short. A short Scripture passage with occasional explanations, is best. A brief address in the simplest language and with plenty of apt illustrations requires ample preparation. Every one who has ever tried knows how difficult it is to say much in a few plain and understandable words. Just as at home there is the temptation to preach only rightly called "moral sermons," so here it is difficult to conquer that temptation. An address upon good works with many phrases of praise to God is readily appreciated. But these people who delight in proclaiming their good deeds before men need something better than sermons on morality—they need the knowledge of the One in Whom only good works count at all. O, for more wisdom! O, for more eloquence! O, for more of the Spirit's power in presenting the Christ and Him crucified! Do these people who pray with their lips, and with their faces toward an earthly sanctuary, know the true God? Are there not many who are repentant, who respect the Christ-man, who are devout in their worship, but who lack everything because they have not so much as heard of the Christ who died to supply everything? The best address, therefore, is one which has a message concerning Him who himself preached, saying: "If any man thirst, let him

come unto me, and drink," "whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die" and "because I live, ye shall live also."

Every one present is requested to rise while the preacher or the doctor offers prayer. This request is readily respected and all remain quiet during the prayer, for all Mohammedans are bound to be reverent when God is addressed. I do not describe the prayer itself, but wish to emphasize that it is the privilege of all Christian friends to join us in this last part of the dispensary service. We can all have power with God in prayer. In your prayers never omit the petition, "Thy kingdom come," in the hearts of the Arabs.

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